

Advanced Placement Exam Fee Waiver FAQ

The Department of Public Instruction has announced that students who take Advanced Placement (AP) exams in the spring of 2016 will get a full or partial waiver of their test fees for English, mathematics, science, and computer science. The entire [press release](#) can be found online.

Q. When will the AP test fee forgiveness take effect?

- A.** It begins this spring. This benefit will be continued in the spring of 2017. The 2017 Legislature will be asked to continue this benefit beyond 2017.

Q. Who is eligible?

- A.** Any North Dakota student participating in the North Dakota AP exams for English, mathematics, science, and computer science qualifies for this benefit, including public school, private school, Bureau of Indian Education, and home-educated students.

Q. What exams will be covered and at what rate?

- A.** The fee waiver covers exams in English, mathematics, science, and computer science only.

Every student gets the first exam free. Students who qualify as economically disadvantaged may take up to four (4) AP exams in those subjects without charge during their high school careers. All other students get a 50% discount on the second, third and fourth exams in English, mathematics, science, or computer science during their high school careers.

If a student has already signed up and paid a fee, they will be eligible for a refund from their school.

Q. Why is the state limiting the test fee benefit to English, mathematics, science, and computer science?

- A.** North Dakota is focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) + English courses because of career demands for these skills within the state. Our future mathematicians, app developers, entrepreneurs, computer programmers, engineers, business developers, and scientists must also be strong readers and writers, effective communicators, critical thinkers, collaborators, and innovators.

Q. How many exams may a student take under the North Dakota exam fee waiver?

- A.** The state's AP exam fee waiver will cover a maximum of four exams during a student's high school career beginning with Spring 2016 exams.

Students electing to take more than four exams or exams in non English, mathematics, science, and computer science areas are responsible for the associated costs.

Q. Some schools require AP students to register and prepay for AP exams. How does this affect fee waivers?

A. Some schools collect payment for the AP exam when the student registers, even though the payment is not made to the CollegeBoard until May, after the exam has been taken. Schools should track student registrations to ensure that parents and students do not pay AP exam fees that are being covered by the state. Schools should develop a process to make sure students receive any refunds they are due.

Q. What is the process for school ordering and invoicing of AP exams?

A. Schools will order the exams exactly how they have done in the past; however, schools need to make sure to get the exams ordered before the CollegeBoard deadline.

The NDDPI is working with CollegeBoard to determine invoicing practices. More information will be shared as it is available.

Q. What if a student has already paid the school for the exam?

A. If the exam qualifies for the economically disadvantaged exam price, the student's payment should be refunded. If the exam qualifies as the student's first AP exam and is not economically disadvantaged, the student's payment should be refunded. If the exam qualifies as the student's second, third, or fourth AP exam and is not economically disadvantaged, the student's payment should be refunded at 50%.

Q. What if schools have used an online system to collect fees?

A. Some North Dakota schools utilize an online program to register for AP exams and collect registration fees. This online program is capable of refunding credit/debit card expenses. Schools should develop a process to make sure students receive any refunds they are due.

Q. How should schools keep track of students taking AP exams from one year to the next?

A. Each school will need to track student participation in the AP exam fee program. The NDDPI is exploring how to best assist schools with this task. More information will be shared as it is available.

Q. For students requesting an alternate testing date because of an illness, school trip, or some other reason, who is responsible for the additional fee?

A. If the CollegeBoard waives the additional fee, there would be no additional expense. If the alternative test date is not approved by the CollegeBoard, then the district or student would be responsible for paying the alternate testing date fee.

Q. Since the state will be covering a portion of the school's AP exam expense, will the school continue to qualify for the CollegeBoard's Large-Volume Exam Rebate?

A. Yes. The CollegeBoard's Large-Volume Exam Rebate is based on the number of AP exams administered. It does not matter who pays for the exams.

Q. The CollegeBoard's standard AP exam fee is \$92 (\$83 test fee + \$9 administration cost); the school retains \$9 as a rebate for administration. How does the state's payment for AP exams in English, mathematics, science, and computer science affect this rebate?

A. The state is covering 50% of the \$83 cost or \$44 per exam. The state's contract with the CollegeBoard does not cover the \$9 rebate for administration. Schools are expected to forgo their \$9 rebate for exams covered by the state. However, some schools have elected to continue to charge their students for this amount. This is a local decision.

Q. What if a student registers for an AP exam that is eligible for the fee waiver, but does not take the test? Who is responsible for the CollegeBoard \$15 unused exam fee?

A. The school should decide whether the unused exam fee should be paid by the school or the student/parent. Some schools collect a \$15 registration deposit. If the student decides not to take the exam, the school may keep the deposit. If the student takes the exam and it qualifies for a fee waiver, the deposit should be refunded.

Q. What if a student's economic status changes from year to year?

A. Students will qualify for the AP exam fees based on their current year's eligibility as economically disadvantaged. For instance, if a student was participating in the free lunch program during the 2015-2016 school year, their participation in an AP Chemistry exam would be covered 100% by the state's program. However, if the family's income changed during the 2016-2017 school year and they were no longer eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the state would cover 50% of the cost of any AP exams in English, mathematics, science, and computer science.

Q. How are students defined as economically disadvantaged?

A. To define economically disadvantaged, North Dakota typically refers to those students participating in the Free & Reduced Price Meal program through the state's School Nutrition Programs (www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/ChildNutritionFoodDistribution). Due to student privacy, districts may restrict who has access to view those students identified as economically disadvantaged. Please refer to your local district policies.

CollegeBoard had alternative criteria for schools and districts to use if Free & Reduced Price Meal program data is not available. Examples may include:

- The student's family income is at or below the Census Bureau's poverty threshold.
- The student's family receives assistance under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act.
- The student is eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

Additional details can be found on the CollegeBoard website at <https://professionals.collegeboard.org/testing/waivers/guidelines/ap>.

Q. Can the exam fee waiver be used for AP exams taken prior to spring 2016?

A. No, AP exams taken in previous school years are not eligible for reimbursement.

Q. If schools have already collected AP exam payment from students, when should they reimburse students/families?

A. Schools and districts can decide locally when and how they will be reimbursing students/families for AP exams that are now being covered by the state AP Exam fee waiver.